

I claim:

1. A convertible inflatable furnishing which comprises an inflatable base including a base upper skin which forms a layer of the upper side of the base, a base lower skin which forms a layer of the lower side of the base, and a rim side which links the edge of the upper side of the base to the edge of the lower side of the base, an inflatable backrest, a fixing means to fix the backrest to the base upper skin, and an air passage between the base and the backrest allowing a flow of air between the inside of the base and the inside of the backrest when loads on the base and backrest change.

2. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 1 wherein the fixing means is sufficiently flexible to allow the backrest to recline increasingly with deflation of the backrest including when the backrest is under an increasing load, and allow the backrest to erect increasingly with inflation of the backrest including when the load on the backrest is reducing.

3. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 2 wherein the air passage is provided by providing a part of the base and the backrest with a shared bladder.

4. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 2 wherein the backrest is positioned at one edge of the base upper skin.

5. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 2 wherein a connecting means is provided to connect a region of the base upper skin to a region of the base lower skin with the connecting means being in tension when the base is substantially inflated and the connecting means having such a length as to constrain horizontal mobility of the base upper skin within 20 cm of the equilibrium position when a horizontal component of force of 100N is applied to the base upper skin.

6. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 5 wherein the connecting means has sufficient tensile strength to absorb pressure shocks resulting from sudden loads applied to the furnishing, such as 100 kg falling 1 metre onto the furnishing.

7. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 5 wherein the connecting means includes an elastic material biasing the region of the base upper skin towards the region of the base lower skin, the elastic material in tension having a elastic modulus capable of supporting an increased load on the backrest wherein the supporting force tending to maintain erection of the backrest is increased when the base volumetrically expands due to increased pressurization of the base resulting from increased compression of the backrest.

8. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 2 wherein a first part of retaining means and a second part of retaining means are provided which can

be fastened together to retain the backrest in a substantially deflated state after the air in the backrest is squeezed out of the backrest into the base through the air passage.

9. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 8 wherein the deflated backrest can be inserted into the base and retained substantially inside the base.

10. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 9 wherein the base can be fully inserted into the backrest when both are deflated.

11. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 10 wherein a first part of fastening means and a second part of fastening means are provided and can be fastened together to retain the deflated base inside the deflated backrest for the purposes of packing and portability.

12. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 11 wherein the first part of the fastening means is also the first part of the retaining means and the second part of the fastening means is also the second part of the retaining means.

13. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 9 wherein the volume of air in the inflated backrest is sufficient to vary the inflation of the base from firm when the backrest is empty to soft when the backrest is full,

and the outer shape of the base has a horizontal breadth of between 700 mm and 1000 mm enabling the base, when rotated onto the rim side, to support the torso of a person at a height where massage and other body manipulation and stretching are facilitated,

and the outer shape of the base upper skin has a horizontal width, transverse to the usual direction of sitting, greater than 600 mm enabling the base upper skin to puff upward beside the outer sides of a sitter's thighs thereby providing armrests.

14. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 2 wherein a cover is provided to cover at least part of the bladder.

15. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 14 wherein the bladder is fully enclosed by the cover, the base lower skin and the base upper skin are parts of the cover, and the bladder is of a size and shape that when inflated fills the cover so that the shape of the cover substantially determines the shape of the furnishing.

16. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 15 wherein the bladder is substantially tubular with sealed ends and the axis of the tubular bladder is curved around the connecting means and the bladder is sufficiently long that a region of the bladder in the vicinity of one sealed end of the bladder abuts a region of the bladder in the vicinity of the other sealed end of the bladder.

17. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 16 wherein a first bladder end protrudes upward into the backrest when the backrest is erect.

18. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 17 wherein the first bladder end is shaped similarly to the backrest so that the bladder rapidly erects the backrest when the retaining means is released and a load is applied to the base.

19. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 18 wherein a nozzle for inflation and deflation of the bladder is positioned near the first bladder end and the nozzle is fixed to the cover to assist in locating the first bladder end in the backrest.

20. The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 18 wherein a nozzle for inflation and deflation of the bladder is positioned near the first bladder end and the nozzle is fixed to the connecting means to assist in locating the first bladder end in the backrest.

21. A convertible inflatable furnishing substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.